

Amendments to the Claims

1.-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Previously amended) A method for testing a biological fluid within the skin of a patient and for determining the concentration of a target constituent contained therein, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an electrochemical cell comprising concentrically spaced-apart inner and outer electrodes and a reaction chamber therebetween, wherein the positions of the inner and outer electrodes are fixed relative to each other, the outer electrode comprising a blunt distal end and the inner electrode comprising a distal end configured to pierce the skin;

inserting the distal end of the inner electrode into the skin;

contacting the skin and exerting a pressure thereon with the blunt distal end of the outer electrode; and

transferring a sample of biological fluid from the pierced skin into the reaction chamber.

40. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39 wherein the transferring of sample biological fluid comprises exerting a capillary force on biological fluid present between the distal end of the inner electrode and the distal end of the outer electrode.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39 wherein the exerting a pressure on the skin causes the skin positioned between the inner and the outer electrodes to bulge into the reaction chamber.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39 further comprising:

providing a first electrode signal to the electrochemical cell; and

receiving a second electrical signal generated by the electrochemical cell, wherein the second electrical signal is representative of the concentration of the constituent in the sample.

43. (Previously amended) An electrochemical cell for use in sampling biological fluid and measuring an analyte therein, the cell comprising:

a first electrode comprising a continuous wall configuration having a distal edge defining a pressure ring;

a second electrode comprising an elongated configuration having a length that extends concentrically within the first electrode, wherein the positions of the first and second electrodes are fixed relative to each other, the second electrode having a distal end configured to pierce a skin surface; and

an open space between the distal edge of the first electrode and the distal end of the second electrode.

44. (Currently amended) The electrochemical cell of claim ~~42~~ 43 further comprising a reaction chamber defined between the first and second electrodes.

45. (Currently amended) The electrochemical cell of claim ~~42~~ 43 further comprising an insulating material between a proximal portion of the first electrode and a proximal portion of the second electrode.

46. (Currently amended) The electrochemical cell of claim ~~42~~ 43 wherein the pressure ring is circular.

47. (Currently amended) The electrochemical cell of claim ~~42~~ 43 wherein the pressure ring is elliptical.

48. (Currently amended) The electrochemical cell of claim ~~42~~43 wherein the pressure ring is oblong.